A Humble
ACKNOWLEDGMENT
OF THE
SINS
OF THE
MINISTERY
OF
SCOTLAND.

Printed in the year 1653.

PREFACE.

ALthough we are not ignorant, that mockers of all ſorts may take occaſion by this Acknowledgment of the Sins of Miniſters, to ſtrengthen themſelves in their prejudices at our perſons and Callings, and turn this unto our reproach, and that ſome may miſconſtrue our meaning therein, as if we did thereby intend to render the Miniſtery of this Church baſe and contemptible, which is far from our thoughts, We knowing and being perſwaded in our ſelves, that there are many able, godly and faithful Miniſters in the Land; yet being convinced that we are called to humble our ſelves, and to juſtifie the Lord in all the contempt that he hath poured upon us: That they who ſhall know our ſins, may not ſtumble at our judgments: We have thought it our duty to publiſh this following Diſcovery and Acknowledgment of the corruptions and ſins of Miniſters, That it may appear how deep our hand is in the Tranſgreſſion, and that the Miniſters of Scotland *have no ſmall acceſſion to the drawing on of theſe judgments that are upon the Land.*

Only in this following Acknowledgment we deſire it may be conſidered, That there are here enumerated ſome ſins, whereof there be but ſome few Miniſters guilty, and others whereof moe are guilty, and not a few, which are the ſins of theſe whom the Lord hath keeped from the more groſſe corruptions herein mentioned; And that it is not to be wondered at, if the Miniſtery of Scotland *be yet in a great meaſure unpurged, Conſidering that there was ſo wide a door opened for the entering of corrupt perſons into the Miniſtery, for the ſpace of above thirty years under the tyranny of Prelats, and that alſo there hath been ſo many diverſions from, and interruptions of endeavours to have a purged Miniſtery in this Land.*

THE

THE SINS OF THE MINISTERY.

First, such as are before their entry to the Miniſtery.

1. LIghteneſs and prophanity in converſation, unſuitable to that holy Calling which they did intend, not throughly repented of.

2. Corrupt education of ſome in the Prelaticall and Arminian way, whereby their corruptions and errors were drunken in, and abilities improven, for ſtrengthening and promoving the ſame, not repented of.

3. Not ſtudying to be in CHRIST, before they be in the Miniſtery; nor to have the practicall knowledge and experience of the Myſtery of the Goſpel in themſelves, before they preach it to others.

4. Neglecting to fit themſelves for the Work of the Miniſterie in not improving prayer and fellowſhip with God, education at Schools and opportunities of a lively Miniſtery, and other means, and not mourning for theſe neglects.

5. Not ſtudying ſelf-denyall, nor reſolving to take up the Croſſe of CHRIST.

6. Negligence to entertain ſight and ſenſe of ſin and miſery, not wreſtling againſt corruption, nor ſtudying of mortification and ſubduedneſſe of ſpirit.

Secondly, in entering.

1. CArnall, corrupt and crooked wayes for entering to the Miniſtery, ſuch as bribing in the time of Prelacie, ſoliciation of friends and the like; whereby many have not entered by the door, but did climb up another way.

2. Entering to the Miniſtery by an implicite, execrable, Canonicall Oath and ſubſcription given to the Prelats for acknowledging them, and advancing their corruptions introduced and to be introduced.

3. Entering to the Miniſtery without tryals, and receiving ordination ejther from the Prelat, or by a recommendation from him to the Presbyterie, and ſometimes without or againſt the minde of the Presbyterie.

4. Entering either only by Preſentations, or by purchaſed Supplications from the plurality of the Parochiners, without or againſt the conſent of the godly in the Parioch.

5. Entering to the Miniſtery without reſpect to a Commiſſion from Jeſus Chriſt, by which it hath come to paſſe, that many have run unſent.

6. Entering to the Miniſtery not from the love of Chriſt, nor from a deſire to honour God in gaining of ſouls, but for by-ends, for a name, and for livelyhood in the World, notwithſtanding ſolemne declaration to the contrary at admiſſion.

7. Some offering themſelves to tryall without abilities, and ſtudying to conceal and hide their weakneſſe, by making uſe of the help and pains of ſome friend and acquaintance, or other mens Papers, in ſeverall parts of the tryall; and ſome authorized to preach, and others admitted to the Miniſtery, who have little or no ability for performing the duties thereof.

8. Too much weighed with inclination to be called to the Miniſtery in a place where we have carnall relation.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, After entering, which is first in their private condition and converſation.

1. IGnorance of God, want of nearneſſe with him, and taking up little of God in reading, meditating, and ſpeaking of him.

2. Exceeding great ſelfiſhneſſe in all that we do, acting from our ſelves, for our ſelves.

3. Not caring how unfaithfull and negligent others were, ſo being it might contribute a teſtimony to our faithfulneſſe and diligence: but being rather content, if not rejoycing at their fault.

4. Leaſt delight in theſe things wherein lyeth our neareſt communion with God, great inconſtancie in our walk with God, and neglect of acknowledging of him in all our wayes.

5. In going about duties, leaſt carefull of theſe which are moſt remote from the eyes of men.

6. Seldome in ſecret prayer with God, except to fit for Publick performances, and even that much neglected, or gone about very ſuperficially.

7. Glad to find excuſes for the neglect of duties.

8. Neglecting the reading of Scriptures in ſecret, for edifying our ſelves as Chriſtians, only reading them in ſo far as may fit us for our duty as Miniſters, and oft-times neglecting that.

9. Not given to reflect upon our own wayes, nor ſuffering conviction to have a through work upon us, deceiving our ſelves by reſting upon abſtinence from, and abhorrencie of evils, from the light of a naturall conſcience, and looking upon the ſame as an evidence of a reall change.

10. Evill guarding of, and watching over the heart, and careleſneſſe in ſelf-ſearching, which makes much unacquaintedneſſe with our ſelves, and eſtrangedneſſe from God.

11. Not guarding nor wreſtling againſt ſeen and known ills, eſpecially our predominants.

12. A facilite to be drawn away with the temptations of the time, and other particulat temptations, according to our inclinations and fellowſhip.

13. Inſtability and wavering in the wayes of God through the fears of perſecution, hazard, or loſs of eſteem, and declining duties,

becauſe of the fear of jealouſies and reproaches.

14. Not eſteeming the Croſſe of Chriſt and ſufferings for his Name honourable, but rather ſhifting ſufferings from ſelf-love.

15. Deadneſſe of ſpirit after all the ſore ſtroaks of God upon the Land.

16. Little conſcience made of ſecret humiliation and faſting by our ſelves apart, and in our Families; that we might mourn for our own and the Lands guiltineſſe and great back-ſlidings, and little applying the Cauſes of publick humiliation to our own hearts.

17. Finding of our own pleaſures, when the Lord cals for humiliation.

18. Not laying to heart the ſad and heavy ſufferings of the people of God abroad, and the not thriving of the Kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt, and the power of godlineſs among them.

19. Refined hypocriſie, deſiring to appear what indeed we are not.

20. Studying more to learn the language of Gods people nor their exerciſe.

21. Artificiall confeſsing of ſin without repentance, profeſsing to declare iniquity, and not reſolving to be ſory for ſin.

22. Confeſsion in ſecret much ſlighted, even of theſe things whereof we are convinced.

23. No Reformation after ſolemn acknowledgments and private Vows, thinking our ſelves exonered after Confeſsion.

24. Readier to ſearch out and cenſure faults in others, then to ſee or take with them in our ſelves.

25. Accounting of our eſtate and way according to the eſtimation that others have of us.

26. Eſtimation of men as they agree with or diſagree from us.

27. Not fearing to meet with tryals, but preſuming in our own ſtrength to go through them unſhaken.

28. Not learning to fear by the falls of gracious men, nor mourning and Praying for them.

29. Not obſerving particular deliverances and rods, nor improving of them for the honor of God, and edification of our ſelves and others.

30. Little or no mourning for the corruption of our nature, and leſs groaning under, and longing to be delivered from

that

that body of death, the bitter root of all our other evils.

Secondly, in our Converſation and Walk with and before theſe of our Flocks and others.

1. FRuitleſs converſing ordinarily with others for the worſe rather then for the better.

2. Fooliſh jeſting away time with impertinent and uſeles diſcourſe, very unſeeming the Miniſters of the Goſpel.

3. Spirituall purpoſes often dying in our hands, when they are begun by others.

4. Carnal familiarity with naturall wicked and Malignant men; whereby they are hardened, the People of God ſtumbled, and we our ſelves blunted.

5. Slighting fellowſhip with theſe by whom we might profit.

6. Deſiring more to converſe with theſe that might better us by their parts, then ſuch as might edifie us by their graces.

7. Not ſtudying opportunities of doing good to others.

8. Shifting of prayer and other duties when called thereto, chooſing rather to omit the ſame, then we ſhould be put to them our ſelves.

9. Abuſing of time in frequent recreation and paſtimes, and loving our pleaſures more then God.

10. Taking little or no time to Chriſtian Diſcourſe with young men trained up for the Miniſtery.

11. Common and ordinary diſcourſe on the Lords Day.

12. Slighting Chriſtian Admonition from any of our Flocks, or others as being below us, and aſhamed to take light and warning from private Chriſtians.

13. Diſlike of, or bitterneſſe againſt ſuch as deal freely with us by admonition or reproof, and not dealing faithfully with others who would welcome it off our hands.

14. Not making conſcience to take pains on the ignorant and prophane for their good.

15. Our not mourning for the ignorance, unbelief, and miſcarriages of the Flocks committed unto us.

16. Impatient bearing of the infirmities of others, raſhly breaking out againſt their perſons, more then ſtudying to gain them from their ſins.

17. Not

17. Not using freedom with these of our charge, and for most part spending our time with them in common discourses, not tending to Edification.

18. Neglecting Admonition to friends and others in an evil course.

19. Reservedness in laying out our condition to others.

20. Not praying for men of a contrary judgment, but using reservedness and distance from them, being more ready to speak of them then to them, or to God for them.

21. Not weighed with the fallings and miscarriages of others, but rather taking advantage thereof for justifying our selves.

22. Talking of, and sporting at the faults of others, rather then compassionating of them.

23. No pains taken in religious ordering of our families, nor studying to be Paterns to other Families in the governement of ours.

24. Hasty anger and passion in our Families and conversation with others.

25. Covetousness, worldly mindedness, and an inordinate desire after the things of this life, upon which followeth a neglect of the Duties of our Calling, and our being taken up for the most part with the things of the World.

26. Want of Hospitality and Charity to the Members of Christ.

27. Not cherishing Godliness in the People, and some being afraid of it, and hating the people of God for Piety, and studying to bear down and quench the work of the spirit amongst them.

Thirdly in the discharge of Ministerial Duties. Which is first in regard of labouring in the Word and Doctrine.

1. NOt entertaining that edge of spirit in Ministeriall Duties, which we found at the first entry to the Ministery.

2. Great neglect of reading and other preparation, or preparation meerly Literal and bookish, making an idoll of a book, which hindereth Communion with God, or presuming on bygone assistance, and praying little.

3. Trusting to gifts, parts and pains taken for preparation, whereby God is provoked, to blaste good matter well ordered and worded,

3. Car-

4. Careleſſe in imploying CHRIST, and drawing vertue out of him for inabling us to preach in the *Spirit* and in power.

5. In prayer for aſsiſtance, we pray more for aſsiſtence to the Meſſenger then to the Meſſage which we carry, not caring what become of the Word, if we be with ſome meaſure of aſsiſtance carried on in the Duty.

6. The matter we bring forth is not ſeriouſly recommended to God by Prayer to be quickened to his People.

7. Neglect of Prayer after the Word is Preached, that it may receive the firſt and latter rain; and that the Lord would put in the hearts of his People what we ſpeak to them in his Name.

8. Neglect to warn in Preaching of ſnares and ſin in Publick affairs by ſome, and too much frequent and unneceſſary ſpeaking by thers of Publick buſineſſe and Tranſactions.

9. Exceeding great neglect and unskilfulneſſe to ſet forth the excellencies and uſefulneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, and the New Covenant which ought to be the great ſubject of a Miniſters Study and Preaching.

10. Speaking of CHRIST more by hear-ſay then from knowkedge and experience, or any reall impreſsion of him upon the heart.

11. The way of moſt Miniſters Preaching too Legall.

12. Want of ſobriety in Preaching the Goſpel, not ſavouring any thing but what is new, ſo that the Subſtantials of Religion bear but little bulk.

13. Not Preaching Chriſt in the ſimplicity of the Goſpel, nor our ſelves the Peoples ſervants for Chriſt ſake.

14. Preaching of Chriſt not that the People may know Him, but that they may think we know much of him.

15. Preaching anent Chriſts leaving the Land without brokenneſſe of heart, or up-ſtirring of our ſelves to take hold of him.

16. Not Preaching with bowels of compaſſion to them who are in hazard to periſh.

17. Preaching againſt Publick ſins, neither in ſuch a way nor for ſuch an end as we ought for the gaining of ſouls, and drawing men out of their ſins, but rather becauſe it is of our concernment to ſay ſomething of theſe evils.

18. Bitterneſſe in ſtead of zeal, in ſpeaking againſt Malignants,

Sectaries, and other scandalous persons, and unfaithfulnesse therein.

19. Not studying to know the particular condition of the souls of the people, that we may speak to them accordingly, nor keeping a particular record thereof, though convinced of the usefulnesse of this.

20. Not wealing what may be most profitable and Edifying, and want of wisedome in application to the severall conditions of souls, not so carefull to bring home the point by application as to finde out the Doctrine, nor speaking the same with that reverence which becomes his Word and Message.

21. Choosing texts whereon we have something to say rather then suting to the condition of souls and times, and frequent preaching of the same things that we may not be put to the pains of new studie.

22. Such a way of Reading, Preaching and Prayer as puts us in these Duties further from GOD.

23. Too soon satisfied in the discharge of Duties, and holding off challenges with excuses.

24. Indulging the bodie, and wasting much time idlely.

25. Too much eying our own credite and applause, and being taken with it, when we get it, and unsatisfied when it is wanting.

26. Timorousnesse in delivering Gods Message, letting people dye in reigning sins without warning.

27. Voguinesse and pride of heart because the Lord fulfilled our word in the year 1648.

28. Rash speaking in the Name of the Lord in reference to the successe of our Armies of late.

29. Studying the discharge of Duties, rather to free our selves from censure, then to approve our selves to God.

30. Shifting to preach in places where we were for the time for fear of displeasing, in this time of Publick backsliding and triall.

31. Not making all the Counsell of God known to his People, and particularly not giving testimony in times of defection.

32. Not studying to profite by our own doctrine, nor the doctrine of others.

33. For most part preaching, as we our selves were not con-

concerned in the Meſsage we carry to the People.

34. Not rejoycing at the converſion of ſinners, but content with the unthriving of the Lords Work amongſt his people as ſuteing beſt with our minds, fearing if they ſholuld thrive better, we ſhould be more put to it, and leſs eſteemed of by them.

35. Many in Preaching and practice, bearing down the power of godlineſs.

36. Unfaithfull diſcharge of Miniſteriall Duties in attending the Armies.

37. We Preach not as before God, but as to men, as doth appear by the different pains in our preparation to ſpeak to our ordinary heares, and to others to whom we would approve our ſelves.

38. Not making the Miniſtery a work in earneſt as a thing to be accounted for in every duty, which makes much lazineſs and unfruitfulneſs, doing duties *ex officio*, not *ex conſcientia officii*, rather to diſcharge our Calling nor our conſcience.

Secondly, In the Adminiſtration of Sacraments.

1. In Baptiſme.

LIttle minding in our ſelves, or ſtirring up of others to minde the obligation that lyes on us and them, by the Covenant made with God in Baptiſme.

2. Not inſtructing Parents in their duty, not charging them with their promiſe given at the Baptizing of their Children, nor trying what pains they have taken to perform the ſame.

3. Being very ſuperficiall and formall in the adminiſtration of this Ordinance.

Thirdly, In the Adminiſtration of the Lords Supper.

ADmitting of mixt multitudes to the Lords Table, not ſeparating betwixt the pretious and the vile.

2. Unequall dealing with poor and rich, in admitting to, or ſuſpending and debarring from the Lords Table.

3. Great neglect to prepare for that action, preparing for it more as Miniſters, then as Chriſtians.

4. Carnall and unworthy carriage of Miniſters at the Commu-

 nion,

nion, being more desirous to have that action by our hands, with credit to our selves, then with profit to the people.

5. Thinking when that action is by-hand, that we have a vacancie from other Ministeriall duties for a time.

6. Little wrestling with God to have the People prepared for it, or the guilt of prophaning of it by our selves and others taken away.

Fourthly, in Visiting.

NEgligent, lazie and partiall visiting the sick; if they be poor, we go once, and only when sent for; If they be rich and of better note, we go oftner, and unsent for.

2. Not knowing how to speak with the tongue of the Learned a word in season to the weary and exercised in conscience, nor to such as are under the losse of husband, wife, children, friends or goods, for the improving of these tryals to their spiritiall advantage, nor to dying persons.

3. In visiting, wearying, or shunning to go to such as we esteem graceless.

4. Not visiting the People from house to house, nor praying with them at fit opportunities.

4. *In Catechising.*

1. LAzie and negligent in Catechising.

2. Not preparing our hearts before, nor wrestling with God for a blessing to it, because of the ordinarines, and apprehended easines of it; whereby the Lords Name is much taken in vain, and the People little profited.

3. Looking on that Exercise as a work below us, and not condescending to study a right and profitabl way of instructing the Lords People.

4. Partial in Catechising, passing by these that are rich and of better quality, though many of such stand ordinarly in great need of instruction.

5. Not waiting upon and following the ignorant, but passionatly upbraiding of them often.

5. *In Ruling and Discipline.*

1. NOt making use of this Ordinance of Church-Censures for gaining of souls, but turning it in a meer Civil puni-

nishement; and in the administration thereof becoming either coldrise, or without a spirit of meekness, and using a way either meerly rational by wordly wisdom, or meerly authoritative, more then by motives drawn from the love of Christ; and by our carriage in Judicatories putting a humane shape upon the Ordinances of Jesus Christ, carrying our selves in too stately a way, like the men of this world.

2. Partiality in administtation of Censures with respect of persons, not using the like faithfull freedom towards high and low, sib and fremd.

3. Rash taking on us to open and shut Christs door.

4. By our practice, teaching (as it were) formality in Repentance to offenders, hardening them in their sins, by accepting bare forms without any evidence of Repentance, and looseing when we were perswaded Christ did not loose: and of late turning profession of Repentance into a State engine for men to step unto preferment and publick employments.

5. Following scandalous persons with the higheſt Censures of the Kirk, with little or no care to hold them up to God.

6. Want of compassion to these on whom Discipline is exercised, not laboring to convince them of sin, but imperiously and with passion instead of zeal threatning them, thinking it sufficient if we be obeyed, though they be not gained to Christ.

7. Superficial, sinful, and slight censuring one another, at times appointed for that end in Presbyteries and Synods, and neglect of faithful freedom and love in performing that duty.

8. Admitting of men to the Ministry who were not qualified with Grace aswel as Gifts, not withstanding the Word of God and Constitutions of this Kirk do require the one, aswel as the other; which hath been the fountain of many evils.

9. Great unfaithfulness in bringing in, and holding in, unworthy persons in the Ministry, and keeping Censures off unfaithful men.

10. Unfaithfulness in giving Testimonials and Recommendations, and receiving persons upon Testimonials meerly negative, especially Expectants and Students of Divinity.

11. Constituting Elderships of such men as are known to be ignorant prophane and disaffected to the Work of God, and being

careleſs to have them conſiſting of the moſt able and godly men within the Congregation, a great cauſe of much ignorance, prophane and ſcandalous carriage among the People.

12. Neglecting to remove from the Elderſhips ſuch as are ignorant and ſcandalous.

13. Neglecting to hold out the neceſſary qualifications and duties of Ruling Elders, and to ſtir them up to their duty.

14. Not carrying our ſelves in Judicatories and other wayes toward Ruling Elders as towards Brethren, and joynt Overſeers in the work of the Lord.

15. Not making conſcience of keeping Kirk Judicatories, but wearying of the expences and attendance, whereby diverſe things hath been haſtert and miſcaried therein: willing deſerting of them, and ſhunning to give teſtimony in them, for fear of inconveniences.

16. Not ſtouping to a gaining way in Debates, nor making application to God for knowledge of his mind in things debated, before they paſs in a concluſion.

17. Wearying to hear men fully who repreſent their doubts, and to weigh all the Arguments that can be repreſented for the negative, before the affirmative be concluded.

18. Too great animoſities in Judicatories, even about matters of ſmall weight.

19. Pride, impatience and peremptorineſs of ſpirit, not ſtaying on others clearneſs in our debates and concluſions, through which it comes to paſs that we judge raſhly of precious men; and alienation of affections ſteals in and is entertained.

20. Haſty concluding of Acts & preſſing obedience thereto without convincing grounds holden forth from Scripture for ſatisfying the conſciences of the Lords People.

21. Silence in Aſſemblies when unſatisfied, being carried by the authority of men, and too much following other mens light and ſuppreſſing their own.

22. Making Votes ſubſervient to the humors of men and humane intereſts.

23. Some altogether neglecting wholſome Acts and Conſtitutions of Aſſemblies, and others, receiving their Acts too implicity.

24. Too bitter expreſſions againſt Adverſaries in Publick Papers and Sermons, for eſhewing reproaches, whereof there is no fruit but irritation.

25. A-

25. Abuſing tranſportations by making them too frequent, and almoſt the ordinary way of Planting places of any eminency; ſometimes enacting them when there is no preſſing neceſſity, and without tender endeavouring the ſatisfaction of the People intereſted and without care of providing them thereafter.

In relation to the Publick.

1. NOt ſtudying the controverſies of the time, that we might be enabled to hold forth light, and convince gain ſayers of the truth.

2. Not fearing to meddle in matters too high for us, and deſiring to be taken notice of, more then to be ſtedable in the Publick.

3. Following of Publick buſſineſs, with too much neglect of our Flocks.

4. Following of Publick buſſineſs with much pride and paſſion, and loftineſs of ſpirit upon carnel principles and deſire to be eſteemed of, rather then true zeal to Jeſus Chriſt and his matters, and with little or no prayer.

5. Superficial admitting of all to the Covenanrs, and ſolemn Acknowledgment, without taking ſufficient pains to inſtruct and inform them in the knowledge of the things contained therein.

6. Being too inſtrumental for bringing diſaffect perſons to truſt.

7. Unequal zeal againſt enemies, cooling in our zeal againſt one enemy as it is increaſt againſt another.

8. Much repining at the judgments of God upon the Land from carnal reſpects, and tranſferring the cauſes of the wrath off our ſelves upon others.

9. Too eaſie ſatisfied in ſuch things as might tend to the prejudice of Chriſts inteaeſt, weighing the conſequences of great Revolutions more by reſpect to our ſelves, then to his honor.

10. Agreeing to receive the King to the Covenant barely upon writing, without any apparent evidences of a real change of Principles.

11. Not uſing freedom in ſhewing what we were convinced, was ſinful in reference to the late Treaty with the King, but going on therein when we were not ſatisfied in our conſciences for fear of reproach and of being miſtaken.

12. Silence in Publick, and not giving Testimony after a discovery of the Kings Commission given to *James Graham*; for invading the Kingdom.

13. Pressing the King to make a Declaration to the world, whilest we knew by clear evidences that he had no real conviction of the things contained therein.

14. Too much desiring to lurk upon by ends, when called to give a Testimony.

15. Not bearing Testimony against Publick Defections in a right and spiritual way.

16. Unfaithfulness in bearing burden with them, whom the Lord raised up to be his witnesses against the publick backslidings, omitting to bear Testimony our selves upon carnal respects and lukewarmness in adhering to publick Testimonies formerly given.

A Postscript.

Which could not be gotten printed.

THe foregoing causes of Gods wrath being on severall dayes of solemne Humiliation laid out & confessed before the Lord, we thought fit to subjoine here some other causes of our late Humiliation; as

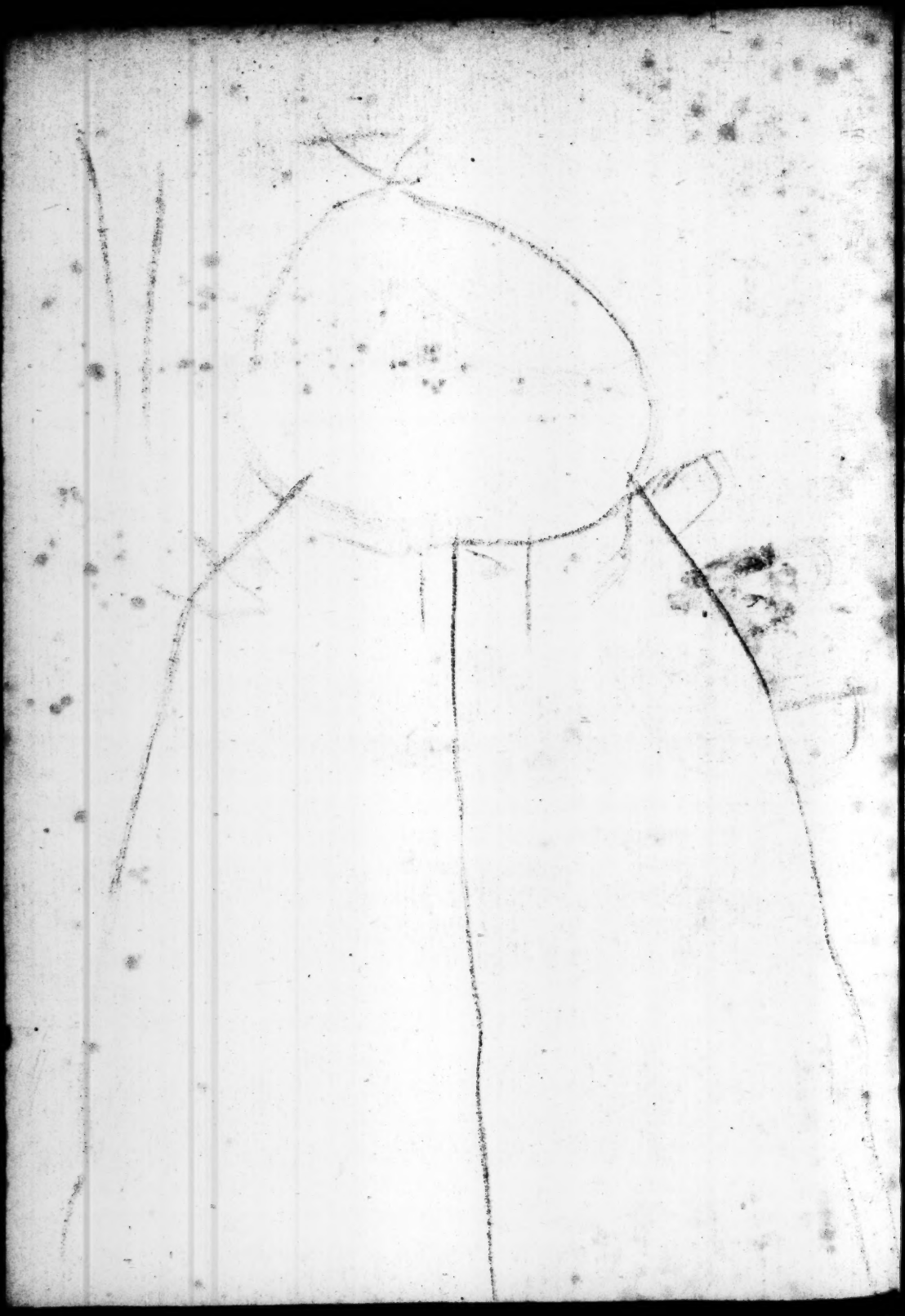
1. The late declining of the Land by consenting & engaging unto the publick actings of the present Powers, so contrary to the Covenants, & so much prejudicial to Religion & liberties.

2. The defection of diverse, who are accounted religious, from their former principles, unto Separation, & other Errours of the time.

3. The Usurpation & Carriage of the present pretended Assembly.

4. The English their great Encroachments upon the Liberties of this Church.

5. That the promised Conversion of His Ancient people of the Jewes may be hastened.

6. That the Lord may make our present resolutions for reforming our selves, our Elderships & people effectual, and may bless our Endeavours to this purpose.

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